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Nonconformists.

antagonists, obnoxious to them on theological grounds, is naively expressed in a petition to the Privy Council from the justices of Suffolk on behalf of the nonconforming ministers. " The painful ministers of the Word are marshalled with the worst malefactors, persecuted, indicted, arraigned, and condemned for matters, as we presume, of very slender moment: some for leaving the holidays unbidden ; some for singing the Psalm Nunc Dimittis in the morning; . . . some for leaving out the cross in baptism ; some for leaving out the ring in marriage. . . . We serve her majesty and the country according to law ; we reverence the law and the law-makers ; when the law speaks we keep silence ; when it commandeth, we obey. By law we proceed against all offenders ; we touch none that the law spareth, and spare none that the law toucheth; we allow not of Papists, of the Family of Love, of Anabaptists and Brownists. No, we punish all these. And yet we are christened with the odious name of Puritans, a name compounded of the heresies above mentioned which we disclaim." The case of these " painful ministers " who refused to conform might be very pitiable. They would have merited more sympathy if they had learned to give others as much credit for conscientious objections as they claimed for themselves. For ministers as well as priests this is a hard lesson to learn.

To Dr Thomas Whitgift, archbishop of Canterbury, these varieties of heterodoxy made little or no difference. Every one who dissented from the Church as established by law was fair prey, whether Presbyterian, Brownist, Anabaptist, Fami-list of Love. The High Commission over which he presided swept them all into its net. He signalled his entrance on his new office by publishing, with the queen's sanction, a series of articles enjoining the strictest conformity on all recusants, and forbidding any one to preach or administer the sacraments unless he subscribed to the queen's ecclesiastical supremacy, the Prayer Book, and the Thirty-nine Articles. The legality of this proceeding was loudly questioned on cogent grounds; but, as Whitgift had the support of the queen, legal objections or appeals to the Council were of no avail to shield those who refused to subscribe from suspension, and a large number of ministers were suspended or deprived accordingly. But suspension or deprivation was mildness itself compared with the